

A SHORT
EXPLANATION
OF
INDULGENCES,

Grounded upon

HOLY SCRIPTURES

And the Authority of POPES and
General-COUNCILS.

*To thee I will give the Keys of the Kingdom of
Heaven.*

St. MATH. chap. xvi.

*Whatever thou untieſt upon Earth, it ſhall be
untied in Heaven.*

St. MATH. chap. xvi. and xviii.

Feed my Lambs, feed my Sheep.

St. JOHN chap. xxi.

By a LOVER of SOULS.

L O N D O N :

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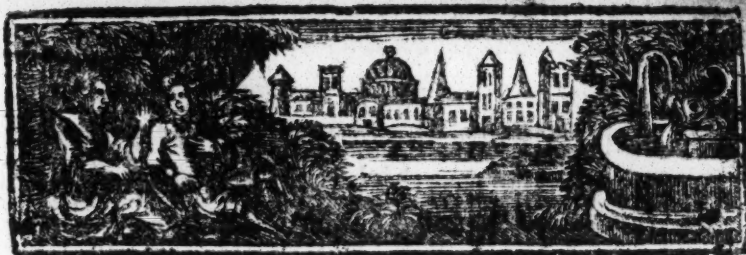
The Spirit of the Lord upon me, because the Lord has anointed me: to preach good tidings to the Meek he sent me, to heal the contrite of heart, and to preach to Captives Indulgence, and Deliverance to those that are shut up. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of Vengeance of our God. To comfort all that mourn. To give strength to the mourners of Sion, a crown for ashes, the oyl of joy for mourning, a mantle of praise for the spirit of sorrowfulness, and they shall be called in it the strong of Justice, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.

Chap. lxi. of the Propbet ISAIAH.

O blessed Guardian of Heaven Gates, to whose Dispensation the Keys of Heaven are intrusted, whose earthly Sentence is made a fix'd Decree in Heaven! Inasmuch that the Things which are either tied or loosen'd upon Earth assume the same fix'd Determination in the celestial Realms.

St. HILARY Comment. in St. MATH.

chap. xvi. A little after the beginning.



A

SHORT and FAMILIAR

TREATISE

CONCERNING

INDULGENCES.

CHAP. I.

*Containing some preparatory Lights
for the clearer understanding of
the Doctrine in this Treatise.*



BEFORE we come to the
Definition of an Indulgence,
as the Subject-matter of this
little Piece ; it may not be
improper to premise some fundamental

Truths on which it depends. Nay, it will be absolutely necessary that the pious Reader should be apprised of them as well for his own Instruction, as to enable him to refute, or at least resist the ensnaring Artifices of certain Men, who void of Shame, as well as Grace, for want of more substantial Prey, blush not to stoop to the base Employ of hunting after every Shadow, to throw Dust in the Eyes of the Weak and to impose upon the Ignorant, to the Discredit of whatever is advanced either to the honour of the Saints in whom (if we may credit holy Writ) God is wonderful ; or in regard to the Power of the Keys, Christ left to his Church. Wherefore as the nature of the subject will require us to have sometimes recourse to Repetitions, we think it needless to make any Apology for what, if it be a Fault, is an unavoidable one: All we hope is, that they will not be irksome, in as much as they will make the deeper Impression on the mind of every Reader, and so will amply requite his Labour. To proceed then, *First*, with regard to the Punishment due
to



to Sin, it is revealed in general, that the Punishment due to Sins will be proportion'd to the heinousness and number of them: God is as infinitely just as he is good and merciful, and as his infinite Goodness inclines him to pardon Sin, so his infinite Justice requires the Sinner should not go unpunish'd. *Secondly*, that every Sin whether Mortal or Venial, entails upon Sinners a proportionable Punishment. *Thirdly*, that by mortal Sin we incur the Guilt of eternal Damnation: That excluding us (according to *St. Paul*) from every Right to the Kingdom of Heaven. However, when once the eternal Guilt, and of course the eternal Punishment attach'd to mortal Sin, or the temporal Guilt and Punishment annex'd to venial Sin, are remitted by a sincere Repentance and Confession, what is or may be, in particular or precisely, the remaining grievousness or duration of the temporal Punishment due to either in this World or in the next, for want of a perfect Contrition or Atonement in the Penitent, I do not find any where reveal'd by the Almighty. All we

know of the matter is, that if the Penances imposed on repenting Sinners, by the Ministers of Christ, according to the Rules of Prudence and Clemency, every Penitent's Condition and Circumstances consider'd, should fall short of their due proportion, and the Penitent does not make up what is wanting by a redoubled fervour of Devotion and Contrition on his side; the Satisfaction due to the divine Justice must needs be defective. Now this is the Defect, which is properly supplied by Indulgences; when the repenting Sinner fulfils what is required.

No man, I believe, will deny it to be in the Power of Princes and Magistrates, for just and weighty Reasons, to pardon not only the Injuries done to their Persons and Laws, but even to remit totally or in part, according as their Prudence and Pleasure directs, the Punishments inflicted by such Laws on Delinquents. Neither will it, I imagine, be disputed, that they have also a right to delegate that Power to their inferior Officers. If so, can there then be any, reason, or even common decency,

decency in denying at least an equal Privilege to the great King of Kings and Lord of all Sovereigns, whose Clemency infinitely surpasses that of mortal Monarchs; whose Mercies are above all his other Works; and his Omnipotence, as well as his Goodness shews itself most, and most brightly in the paternal Tenderness he exerts in favour of us poor sinful Beings?

That he has delegated this Power to the Ministers of his holy Church, the Dispensers of his sacred Mysteries, is clear from Christ's own Words recorded in *St. Mathew* xvi. 18. and in *St. John* xxi. where the Power of the Keys to open and shut heaven Gates promised and given to *St. Peter* and his Successors fully prove it. For not only Sin itself, but even the Punishments incurr'd by it, if they are not first remitted on Earth, must hinder our entrance into that celestial Mansion, where no Suffering can find admittance: and that *St. Peter* had power delegated to him, not barely to remit canonical Penalties in the Court of the Church-Militant, but even Sin itself, and also the Punish-

ments due to it from the divine Justice with regard to the Court of the Church-Triumphant, is full as clear from those expressive Words, *they shall be remitted in Heaven*, the meaning of which, if they be allow'd to have any meaning as I presume they will be, must be, that in the very instant, when we are absolved on Earth (by virtue of the above mentioned Authority) from any Sin, or Punishment due to Sin, which might retard our Way to Heaven in that instant we are absolved from it also in Heaven. There is no distinction or restriction of any Sins or Punishments, nor any Clause of Limitation to the external Court of the Church here upon Earth only, in the Words of our adorable Saviour. What Presumption then must it not be in meer Mortals to dare, without being able to produce any Commission for it from him, to limit what he does not think proper to limit ; and That to the prejudice of the whole body of the Faithful !

From these words of our adorable Redeemer, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost,*
whose

whose Sins ye remit, they are remitted, it is justly inferr'd that the Guilt of Sin, and the eternal Punishment, which is due to it when Mortal, is remitted both in Heaven, and on Earth. Why then does not the same consequence, drawn from the preceeding Quotation, hold good, when apply'd to venial Sin, or to the temporal Punishment due to That and to mortal Sin forgiven; and this, as well in the Court of Heaven as in the Court of the Church upon Earth?

How very void of Thought therefore must not those Gentlemen be, who (for Reasons best known to themselves) artfully insinuate to the People by Word and Writing, that Indulgences are nothing more than a Relaxation of the severe Penalties imposed upon Sinners by the ancient Canons of the Church, that is, by the old Ecclesiastical Laws; which is nothing less than saying in plain *English*, that by the Power of the Keys, or what is the same, by the power of binding and loosing (with regard to our present Subject) is only to be understood a Power of making severe Laws against Sinners,

and dispensing from them, when it is thought fit. So that according to these soft-speaking Gentlemen, the Power of granting Indulgences amounts to nothing more than a Power to remit a part, or all of the Canonical Penances, or penal Laws of the Church; and an Indulgence is no more according to them, than such a Relaxation. A Doctrine so exotic, that it cannot take root among the truly faithful, but by the help of the grossest Ignorance, and therefore must make the Teachers of it appear to all sober thinking Catholicks either extremely ignorant, or extremely rash (to say no more of them) as I shall immediately prove.

The penitential Canons have proved impracticable, and on that account been obsolete these many hundred years. Consequently they have just so long ceased to be binding, and are absolutely no Law at all. If then there was any Sense or Truth in their Doctrine, it would reduce the Power of granting Indulgences, and the Indulgences themselves to as meer Phantoms, as their own Imaginations really are. For what better than a Phantom can we call a
Dispensation

Dispensation or Relaxation from a Law, which for many Ages, ceased to be in Force, and therefore in Course ceased to be a Law. I believe it would puzzle very much the Broachers of this Opinion to make it out, how such a pretended Relaxation from Penal Laws not in Force (which as it already appears would be as ridiculous as needless) can be *most beneficial to the Faithful*, as nevertheless the Council of *Trent* declares Indulgences to be. But to confute this Tenet yet farther, I beg leave to ask the Abettors of it a few plain Questions.

First, In ancient times when those severe Canons or penal Laws were in force, which the Church found necessary to enact, to put a stop to, and deter Christians from flagrant Enormities, and publick Scandals; did or could such of the Faithful as were innocent of those Enormities or Scandals, reap any Benefit by Indulgences? or do, or can the Faithful now living, who have never incurr'd the Penalties mention'd in those Laws profit by Indulgences? Nay farther, I ask, can Indulgences (if nothing

thing more than they make of them) be granted to such Christians without a ridiculous Imposition ; when on one hand these Christians have done nothing to incur the severe Penances enjoined by ancient Canons ; and on the other hand, Indulgences according to them are no more than a Dispensation from those Penances, and therefore capable of only being applied to the Guilty ? *Secondly*, can it be fair and just to teach the People that they are dispensed from certain Severe Penalties enjoined them by ancient Laws and Canons, when in fact there are no such Laws subsisting in force neither in the Court of Conscience, nor at the external Tribunals of the Church ? Or could it be honest in the Church to invite and encourage as it does all the Faithful to gain Indulgences as *most beneficial* to them, when at the same time infinite numbers of good-livers could not possibly reap the least Benefit by them for want of having by some Enormities fallen under those Laws ? Would not this be an Imposition inconsistent with the Purity of that Church to which Christ so expressly promised the Spirit of Truth,

Truth, to guide it into all Truth to the end of the World? And yet what less than this follows from such Doctrine?

Tbirdly, Then would it not be much more consistent with sound Truth and Faith to own that the above-mention'd Words of our divine Redeemer, utter'd by him without Restriction, import a plenitude of Power in the Church with regard both to Sin and Punishment eternal and temporal, as well as to the enacting necessary Laws for the good of Souls, and for the external government of the Faithful? upon the whole then it must hence be concluded that this Tenet is more calculated to discourage true Piety, than to promote Devotion. Let it suffice therefore to say, that the Levity as well as Falshood, which it seems to be big with, must to all solid Catholicks, who will but make use of Reflection, stand sufficiently exploded by their own Absurdity.

Indeed had the Authors of this Novelty instead of taking pains to put the people out of conceit with Indulgences, from which they might draw so much Benefit, taken a little more pains to explain

plain the Nature and Usefulness of them, or had they endeavour'd to deter Men from Sin and publick Scandal, by informing them of the severe Penances formerly inflicted on publick Sinners by the ancient Canons or Laws of the Church, their Endeavours had been highly commendable. I say, *inflicted on publick Sinners*: For it never was the Practice, or Intention of the Church by those or any other Laws to appoint any sort of publick Penance for private Sins. So as in any manner whatever, directly or indirectly to countenance the breaking of the sacred Seal of Confession, that is the inviolable Secret which the Ministers of that Sacrament are bound to keep, under pain of eternal Damnation, as well as of the most severe temporal Punishments. Whereas that would have been the necessary Consequence, if publick Penances had been injoin'd for secret Offences. And therefore if there ever were any Persons whose Fervor urged them to expose themselves to publick Confusion, by freely embracing those publick Penances for secret Crimes; it must be ascribed
to

to the abundance of their Sorrow, Detestation and Horror of them, to the deep Sense they themselves had of the Injury they had offer'd to the Almighty, and their own Souls thereby, and not to the Church's obliging them to do so either by her Laws, or Priests. On the contrary, the Church in general discourages as a dangerous Zeal all such external Marks of Repentance in a private Penitent, and has her very wise Reasons for it.

C H A P. II.

*Of the Treasure of the CHURCH,
and in what it consists.*

BEFORE I proceed it will be necessary, *First*, to premise, that to pay, or attribute to the Saints too much Honour and Veneration, or more than is due to them as to favourite Friends, Creatures, and Servants of God; and to diminish that Honour and Veneration, which are due to them as such, are the two extreams of Impiety
and

and Error. For it is very plain, that the former would be levelling at the Honour of God himself by raising his Creatures above their created Nature, and consequently to a degree of equality with God himself. And it is full as plain, that the latter would also be a diminution of his Glory, as much as depends on us. Since it would be a denying the very Honour which God is pleased to confer upon them, by shewing and manifesting his Power and wonderful Works in and by them.

Now therefore to come to the Point, by the Word *Treasure* is commonly meant an abundance of Riches laid up in store. Whence by a Metaphor, the spiritual Riches of the Soul contain'd under the Power of the Keys, and dispensable by that Power to the Faithful, at the good Pleasure, and inspired Direction of the Church, are called a Treasure. St. Paul himself, calls them so in his Epistle to the *Ephes.* iii. 8. where he says, *To me, the least of all the Saints, is given this grace among the Gentiles, to preach the unsearchable Riches of Christ, and to make all men*
see

see what is the Dispensation of the Mystery hidden from Eternity in God. For what else can St. Paul mean by the *unsearchable Riches*, but the Copiousness and inestimable Benefits of a spiritual kind which Christ merited for us? What by *the Dispensation of the Mystery*, but Christ's bitter Sufferings and Death upon the Cross for our Sakes, eternally decreed, fulfill'd in time, and now applied or applicable to us in the standing Memorial of it in the holy Sacrifice of the Altar, in the holy Sacraments and Works of Piety, or to be dispensed to us by Indulgences?

In all well-govern'd Nations, we find there is a publick Treasury, from whence is taken in time of publick Distress, whatever is necessary for the Relief of the People. So, infinite Thanks to our generous Redeemer for his care and tenderness, he has erected in the Monarchy of his Church a Treasury also, whence is dealt out whatever can be wanting in weak Christians towards the discharging the Debts they owe to the divine Justice. And this is so proportion'd to Equity, that nothing need
be

be wanting to compleat an exact Balance between the Creator and his Creatures. The Justice of our offended God is infinite, our Debts too are infinite, on account of the infinite Satisfaction due to him for the Crimes by which we have offended his infinite Majesty, and here is an infinite Satisfaction in Fact offer'd for our Debts to God, and left by Christ himself to his Vicegerent on Earth, to be by him offer'd to the eternal Father; that in virtue of that Offering, we to whom it is applied may be absolved from and acquitted of those Debts, thro' his ineffable Mercy and Authority, who knows our Infirmities, and sees how little we are able to do of ourselves, finite impotent Creatures as we are. A liberality this is which, if sufficiently weigh'd, might suffice to elevate our Souls to an extasy of Love, Adoration, and Thanksgiving.

But not to interrupt the Thread of this Subject. The real Truth is, that the Treasure of the Church consists only in the infinite Merits and inexhaustable Riches of Christ's bitter Death and Passion

sion laid up in store for us, and they indeed are more than enough to answer our utmost Wants, and Wishes; superabundantly sufficient to ransom infinite Worlds both from Sin and every Punishment due to it. And as they are of infinite divine Value, nothing can be added to or subtracted from them without detracting from their divine Infinity. And being spiritual and of an infinite Value, have no Parts but are wholly and entirely applied and applicable to Millions and Millions of Souls without End, as they have been and will be in the Sacrament of Baptism to the End of the World, for the Remission of Original-Sin, and the eternal punishment due to it.

Whatever then some learned Men speculatively may say of this Treasure's consisting also in, and being amplified in some Sense by the super-abundant Satisfaction of the Saints, that is no Article of Faith, or Term of Communion, and therefore we are no ways bound to follow their private Opinions, especially in what seems in the least to derogate from the Fulness of our Redemption

demption through *Jesus Christ*. However for the Satisfaction of every Reader, I shall here briefly lay before him their Reasons for what they advance, together with my own for dissenting from them, that he himself may be able to judge on which Side Truth and Solidity prevails.

They say (and so far they say rightly, for it is the general Sentiment of the Church) that the sacred Virgin Mother of God never sinned even venially. And indeed how could Satan, even for a Moment, find any the least Footing in, or defile the purest of Creatures, whom the Holy Ghost was to overshadow, as in Fact he did; and who was from all Eternity chosen to be the Temple, and Receptacle of the living God? Nevertheless this immaculate Creature suffer'd more upon Earth than all other Creatures. Nay, they farther piously imagine that many Martyrs and other Saints endured more Torments, Afflictions and Austerities than their Sins deserved. And though this is a bare Surmise, and can be known only to God, yet they conclude from hence, that

that whatever was super-abundant in the Sufferings of those Martyrs and Saints, is laid up in the Treasury of the Church to be distributed to the weak and indigent Members of Christ's mystical Body. Otherwise it would remain, as they say, unrewarded. But how very weak this Reasoning is, will very shortly appear.

Thus far indeed it is true, that their Opinion does not contradict the Principles of our Faith: This teaching us that all our Sufferings, Austerities, &c. take their Merit and Value from and thro' Christ, in whom we live and move, and under whose spiritual Influence we endeavour to satisfy the divine Justice for ourselves and others, by bringing forth worthy Fruits of Penance, to which we are in a particular Manner excited and encouraged by him in the Indulgences which are granted us from him and by his Authority. For it is by him that those very Indulgences are offer'd to the eternal Father, and through him that they are accepted and confirm'd in Heaven. This is what every Catholick will and must allow, and
this

this is all that concerns Faith, as to the Subject immediately under Consideration. However this is no ways in Favour of the Opinion of these Divines, but rather serves to corroborate our Reasons for dissenting from it.

Neither can the Parities of the Loadstone and the Vine, be any more serviceable to the Support of their Sentiments, as will appear upon Examination. The divine Magnetick Christ our Lord, *say they*, draws all to himself who do not perversly resist his divine Attractives: And to them he communicates the like Virtue of Attraction in a less Degree: Just as the Loadstone, which is noted not only for drawing Iron and Steel to itself, but even for communicating the like attractive Quality to either or both these Metals by meer Contact. Again, the Vine not only gives Vigour to the Branches sufficient to subsist themselves, but even adds to them the Virtue of producing innumerable Leaves, Shoots and Fruit. So Christ Jesus, who is the Vine, communicates to the Just, who are his Branches, not only all the nutrimental

Graces

Graces and Virtues necessary for themselves, but even the Faculty of transferring them in some Degree to others. All this is very true, I own; but what then? Simile's like these may be exceedingly useful to illustrate our Holy Faith as to what has been said above; that is, that whatever the Saints did or we can do towards gaining eternal Life ourselves or drawing others to it by our good Example and Prayers, all must come originally from, through, and by Jesus; who is the divine Magnetic, by whose Efficacy ourselves are drawn and enabled to draw others to good; the heavenly Vine, whence we suck in all the nutrimental Juices by which we feed Virtue in ourselves, and give Birth to it in others.

Nevertheless all this is very little to the Purpose towards proving that the Treasure of the Church consists, not only in the infinite Merits of Christ's bitter Death and Passion, but even in the super abundant Satisfaction of the Saints added to those infinite Merits. This I am apt to think will appear evidently, if we do but consider in what Manner,

Manner, and how far the Merits and Sufferings of the Saints can contribute to our spiritual Good. So far then is undeniably true, that tho' the Saints can add nothing to Christ's plentiful Redemption of us, and infinite Satisfaction for us, he alone being the necessary and all sufficient Propitiation for our Sins, and all Punishments due to them; yet all the Saints may gratefully assist us towards reaping the Benefit of that Redemption and infinite Satisfaction, which cannot be applied to us without the Consent of our free Will. Now the Ways by which they assist us are,

First, By their Examples, rousing us, and encouraging us to the Imitation of their long Patience and steady Virtue. For we can no longer doubt of those Virtues being practicable and the Evils tolerable, which are the Subjects of Christian Study, when we have glorious Instances of both in Persons of as delicate, and sensible a Nature as ourselves. Still in vain do we hope for any Assistance from them in this; unless we ourselves resolve in earnest

to

to shake off Indolence, to rouse and exert ourselves, and lose no Time in setting about treading in their Foot-steps and copying after their Holiness of Life, according to our several Stations and best Abilities. Without thus much on our Sides, their Example on the contrary will become a Reproach and Condemnation to us.

Secondly, By their Intercession we obtain many special Graces and Favours from God (thro' Christ our Lord, the Source of all our Good in Heaven and Earth) if we are so happy as to gain their Protection by the Assiduity of our Devotion.

Thirdly, While we are in a State of Grace, *that is*, free from mortal Sin, we are Partakers of their Prayers and Merits, in the like manner as we are of those of the Church-Militant, which is the mystical Body of Christ living upon Earth in a constant Warfare, against the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, and struggling towards Heaven. Such are all our Fellow-Members in Christ, who are mutually cherish'd and spiritually assisted by the mutual Circulation

lation of one another's Good-works and Prayers, as the Members of a natural Body are supported by the Circulation of the Blood from one to another. And in That consists the Communion of Saints profess'd in the Apostles-Creed.

Fourthly, The Father of all Mercy and Comfort, in Consideration of the Prayers and Merits of our triumphant Brethren the Saints (which Merits, as *St. Augustin* justly remarks, are his own Works and Gifts) commiserates us poor miserable Sinners, and graciously pardons us many human Frailties thro' *Jesus Christ*, who is our only Redeemer. The Holy Scriptures are full of Instances of this: Among others, in *Exodus*, chap. xxxii. the Wrath of God against the *Jews* is appeased by the Prayers of *Moses* reminding him of his Promise, that he would shew Mercy and Protection to them for the sake of his Servants *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*. In the fourth of *Kings* the Almighty declares he will protect and save *Jerusalem* for his own sake, and for the sake of *David*.

Before

Before I say any more on this Head, I cannot but cite here what Mr. *Thorn-dike*, a learned Protestant writes upon it in his just *Weights and Measures*. cap. xvi. p. 97. Thus all Members of the Church-Triumphant in Heaven according to their Degrees of Favour with God, abound also with Love to his Church-Militant on Earth, therefore it is certain both that they offer continual Prayers to God for its Necessities, and that their Prayers must be of great Force and Effect with God for the Assistance of the Church-Militant in her Warfare; whence he infers (and that very justly) that the Living ought to beg a Part and Interest in those Prayers, which they who are so near God in his Kingdom, tender to him without ceasing, for the Church upon Earth. Again, page 355, in his Epitome of the Laws of the Church, he has what follows. As our Saviour argues well, that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are alive and shall rise again, because God is not the God of the Dead, so is the Consequence as good, that what God does for their Sakes he does for their Mediation and Intercession.

tercession. This learned Gentleman knew better what was meant by the Communion of Saints in the Apostles Creed, than is now-a-days understood by Protestants.

Again, the last Chapter of *Job* is so evident a Proof of this Matter, as to render all others needless. All which demonstrate not only how greatly *God* honours and distinguishes his Saints, but even of what Efficacy their Merits and Prayers are in his Sight, and how much he is honour'd and glorified in the inferior Honour we pay to them for his Sake. Notwithstanding all this, it seems nevertheless true, that the Treasure of the Church consists only in the infinite Merits of Christ; and the Reasons that induce me to say so are,

In the *first* Place, whatever the Saints thro' the Grace of Christ have done and suffer'd for him and his Church and Holy Faith, seems fully rewarded by *the eternal Weight of Glory above Measure exceedingly* bestow'd upon them as *St. Paul* says, *Cor. iv. 17.* And that in different Degrees ineffably

effably varied by the divine Goodness and Justice, according to their several Merits and Sufferings: For *as one Star differs from another in Glory, so will and do the Saints in Heaven.* Nor can it be reasonably conceived, that immeasurable eternal Felicity will admit of any Comparison with limited temporal Sufferings of any Kind or Duration whatever. I am still then in Concert with St. Paul, Rom. viii. in believing and saying as he says. *I think that the Sufferings of the present Time are not worthy to be compared with the future Glory which shall be reveal'd in us.*

Again, all the Sufferings and Satisfaction of the Saints, tho' ever so much above their Sins, were all certainly meritorious through Christ's assisting Grace alone; and These, as such, are All rewarded with an infinite Hundred-fold, if I may use the Word; *for God renders to all according to their Works*; and That with regard to the Good, above Measure exceedingly, as St. Paul says. In crowning their Merits too, he crowns nothing, as I remark'd

out of St. *Augustin*, but what are his own Works originally. Wherefore as no Good remains unrewarded in the Saints, what super-abundance can there remain behind, towards increasing the Treasure of the Church? But it seems those Divines, who are for swelling that Fund of spiritual Riches, with this super-abundance of Merits in the Saints, lay a mighty Stress upon the Words of *Pope Clement* the VIth, for the Support of their Opinion. To shew then what Reason they have so to do, I shall here give those Words at full length, and they are as follow: *Christ, says the holy Father*, “ committed the Treasure of his
 “ Passion to PETER, and his Successors, for proper and reasonable Motives, to be profitably dispensed to
 “ the Faithful, and to be mercifully applied to Penitents, sometimes for
 “ a total Remission of the Punishment due to Sin, sometimes for Part of
 “ the same, as they shall judge expedient according to God. To the Heap of
 “ which Treasure it is notorious that the Merits of the blessed Virgin, Mother
 “ of

“ of God, and of all the Elect from first
“ to last are assisting.” Now all which
seems to favour the Opinion of those Di-
vines, is the last Period. But how very
little it really does favour them, will
evidently appear, if we explain it ac-
cording to the Principles of Faith and
Reason. And according to these, His
Holiness says nothing more than what
I said above, and which is certain, *viz.*
that the Merits and Prayers of the
Saints are assisting to us in the Sight of
the Almighty, that the Passion of
Christ may be beneficial to us. God
of his infinite Mercy, in Consideration
of their Merits, and for their Sakes, is
often pleased to look down upon us,
when we ourselves deserve it the least,
and is graciously pleased in Compli-
ance with their Sollicitations in our Be-
half, to grant, among other Mercies,
that the infinite Riches of his Son’s
Passion and Death, be applied to us
not only for the Remission of Sin, but
even of the Punishment due to it. Now
if it be called a Treasure, that God out
of his boundless Mercy is pleased that
we should have many Intercessors in

Heaven as well as upon Earth under Jesus Christ our Head and our only Redeemer, and that through his Merits and Passion they should obtain many Favours for us from the eternal Father ; let it be called so : My Purpose is not to dispute about Words, but merely to advance what is of Faith, and will consequently be reconcilable with Reason. For tho' Faith be infinitely superior to Reason ; yet it is not in the least, nor can it be, contradictory to Reason ; as coming itself from, and teaching nothing but what is reveal'd by immutable Truth, the Source and Light of Reason. And in this Sense alone Pope Clement can be understood to say, that the Merits of the Blessed Virgin and the rest of the Saints are assisting to the Treasure of the Church, which is the Merits and Passion of Christ. But this no way makes for the Opinion of those Divines. Certain it is, that the more Persons are drawn by the Dispensation of this Treasure to Repentance and Justification, the more Intercessors we have. Because by them the Glory of Christ

is

is extended wider and wider; through whose Grace alone their Prayers and Good-works are profitable to themselves while on Earth, and become beneficial to us when they are in Glory, by means of their Example to us, and their Dearness and their Applications to God in our Behalf. But this can no ways be said to be any Help to the infinite Price of our Redemption, to this Treasure infinite in itself, and so infinite as to suffer no Help, Diminution or Addition to be made to it. Nor does Pope *Clement*, in reality, make the least mention of these superabundant Satisfactions being committed to St. *Peter* and his Successors, to be applied to the Faithful. And how could he when there was no room for it. And when all the superabundant Satisfactions of the Saints must be intirely superfluous since the Plenty of Redemption wrought by Christ left nothing wanting? Whereas if the Advocates for such superabundance of Satisfaction in the Saints, will have the Treasure of Christ's Redemption to be increased by them, it must con-

frequently be granted, that they add to the said Treasure, and in course, that something would have been wanting without such an Addition.

If it be ask'd, what St. *Paul* means then, when he says to the *Colossians*, (i. 24.) I accomplish those Things which are wanting of the Passion of Christ in my Flesh for his Body which is the Church ; the Question is answer'd, if we do but recollect, that God who created us without us, who redeem'd us without us, will not save us without us ; and therefore tho' it would be absurd to gather from the Words of St. *Paul*, that any thing was really wanting on Christ's Side towards our Redemption, yet on our Sides something still remains wanting to render his Passion and plentiful Redemption of us useful to us ; and That is our own Acceptance of, Co-operation with, and Application of it. That then which seems wanting in the Passion of Christ concerns wholly and only the Members of his mystical Body the Church, who to reap the Benefit of the dear invaluable Treasure of his Death and
Sufferings,

Sufferings, must apply it to themselves by means of the holy Sacrifices of the Altar, and a devout and frequent Recourse to the holy Sacraments, Indulgences, and other Works of Piety.

Now as we ourselves are apt to be but too tardy and tepid in doing this, and at best defective in our Co-operations; the Intercession of the Saints is so far useful as to obtain for us the Graces which often-times our own Remissness does not deserve, and which probably would not be granted us, did not the Communion of their Prayers with ours render our Applications more acceptable to the divine Sovereign whose Favourites they are. So far and no farther are the Prayers and Merits of the Saints beneficial to us. And therefore though, in regard to our own Co-operation, they may be said to supply what is wanting of the Passion of Christ; still on Christ's Side there neither is nor can be any thing wanting to his Passion and plentiful Redemption, and consequently the infinite Treasure of his sacred Merits can suffer no Addition from the super-abundant

abundant Merits of the Saints. It being true of them, as of us poor Pilgrims, that *of his Fulness we have all partaken*. So that in few Words, what is really meant by the Treasure of the Church are the dear inestimable Riches of Christ's precious Life, Passion, Death and Merits left to the Church to be dispensed to the Faithful according to that supernatural Wisdom with which her heavenly Spouse endow'd her, sometimes for a total Remission of the Punishment due to Sin, sometimes for Part of the same, as she shall judge expedient according to God. And to the Heap of this Treasure the Merits of the Blessed Virgin Mother of God, and of all the Elect from first to last are assisting in no other Sense than by strengthening our Cooperation, in joining with us, and by rendering our Application of that sacred Treasure to our Souls so much the more effectual than it would be, if we had not the Assistance of their Examples to spur us up to Fervour, of their constant Intercession to render our Petitions more acceptable to God, who

who is graciously pleased oftentimes to overlook what is offensive in us, in Consideration of what is amiable in these our celestial Solicitors so precious in his Sight.

C H A P. III.

*Of the Nature of INDULGENCES,
JUBILEES, &c.*

AN INDULGENCE is a Remission of temporal Punishment due to the divine Justice, after the Guilt of Sin is pardon'd, issuing from lawful Authority, by a due Application of the Treasure of the Church to the Faithful. Now to know what is the Source of the Authority it springs from, we are inform'd by St. *Bonaventure* (4. D. 20.) " That the supreme Bishop Successor to St. *Peter*, " being the Vicar of Christ upon " Earth, and sovereign Governor of " the universal Church, to him belongs the Dispensation of her spiritual Treasure, and as he has the " Care of the whole Church, and all " her

“ her Children committed to him, to
 “ him appertains the Power of granting
 “ Indulgences to all the Faithful dis-
 “ persed over all the World.”

St. *Thomas of Aquin* also in Confor-
 mity with all Antiquity (*Quest. 26. Art.*
3.) informs us, that the “ Pope has a
 “ Plenitude of Power in the Church,
 “ as a King has in his Kingdom. O-
 “ ther Bishops are called only to a Part
 “ of the Pastoral Sollicitude, as Judges
 “ and Magistrates are placed over par-
 “ ticular Parts of the State ; whereas
 “ the Pope is over all. And therefore
 “ it is, that tho’ the Pope in his Pas-
 “ toral Letters, calls them his Bre-
 “ thren, yet he calls all the Faithful
 “ his Children ; and all call and deem
 “ him their common Father.”

Hence it is that the Power of grant-
 ing Indulgences is limited in other Bi-
 shops to their own Diocese only, and
 there, within certain Bounds : As for
 Example, at the Dedication of a Church
 they can grant one Year’s Indulgence,
 but on the Anniversary only, and in
 other Cases but forty Days Indulgence.
 The Pope alone has the Plenitude of
 Power

Power to grant Indulgences to the whole Body of the Faithful, and Plenary ones too.

What is meant by a **PLENARY INDULGENCE** is a total Remission of all the Punishments due to our Sins, which otherwise must be endured either here or hereafter. A **JUBILEE** is only different from a *Plenary Indulgence* in this, that by the former full Power is granted to all approved Priests to absolve from Censures, and That in Cases even reserved to the Pope, to exchange certain simple Vows, &c. as expressed in the Pope's Bulls. And the Works of Piety required in time of a *Jubilee* towards gaining the *Plenary Indulgence* then granted, are generally greater than at other Times.

By an *Indulgence of a thousand, of seven hundred Years, of one Year, of forty Days*, nothing more is understood, than that if the Number and Heinousness of the Sins we have confess'd, been absolved from, and amended, tho' not sufficiently wept or atoned for, should deserve to be punish'd temporally for all or any of the Spaces above-mention'd,
all

all or Part of that Space of Punishment is remitted upon certain Conditions required in lieu of it. So that if they deserved to be punish'd longer than *forty Days, a Year, seven hundred, or a thousand*, All or Part of that Term, and the Punishments to be endured in it, shall be remitted according as express'd in the Grant.

But here perhaps some one may ask, as it is not impossible, that the Sins I have been absolved from the Guilt of, may still, thro' my past and present Remissness to atone for them, deserve a *thousand Years* Punishment, or more or less, and yet it is impossible morally speaking, that I should live to do so many Years Penance, and may even die before I gain an Indulgence, must I then necessarily make up that full Term of Years in Purgatory? No, this does not necessarily follow. *First*, Because a few Years, Months, or Days suffering there may prove equivalent to whatever Number of Years, &c. we can suffer in this Life, on account of the Acerbity and Intenseness of those Pains; the Soul in a State of

Sepa-

Separation from the Body being inexpressibly more sensible to what it suffers than while imprison'd in and link'd to the Flesh. Besides that the being then violently detain'd from the beatifick Vision, when in a natural Fitness for it, and thus violently detain'd from sovereign Joy for the momentary Follies it committed, is alone a Circumstance more afflicting than all the Sufferings which Time could subject it to in the Body. *Secondly*, Much more, because, tho' the Satisfaction due to God may render us subject to such a long Term of Sufferings in Purgatory, yet in Virtue of the Communion of Saints, the Sacrifices, Prayers and Good-works of our surviving Brethren offer'd up to God for us, who can no more merit or atone for ourselves, but by Suffering, may respit, shorten, and even wholly wipe off our Score of Punishments, according as the divine Bounty is pleased to accept of them thro' Jesus Christ our Lord, the only essential, independent Advocate and Mediator of our Redemption and all our Good.

How-

However upon the whole it is neither impossible nor improbable, that the Number and Heinousness of our Sins on one hand, and the Slackness of our Repentance on the other, may subject us (after being by the means of sacramental Grace absolved from the Guilt of them) to *a thousand* and perhaps many more *Years* Punishment and Detention from God after Death, if we do not take Care to expiate our Crimes in this Life by voluntary Acts of Penance and Piety. *Again*, tho' it be true that the Bitterness of the Sufferings hereafter is inconceivably superior to That of ^{all} the Sufferings of this World; yet one Minute's voluntary suffering here for the pure Love of God, and from an humble penitential Motive of appeasing the divine Justice, is far more efficacious in itself, towards satisfying the offended Majesty of God, than *a Year's* (nay perhaps *a thousand Years*) suffering by Compulsion. And therefore as none of us can know how long a Term of Torments, nor how severe a Series of Punishments there remains for us to endure, or discount;
and

and since (as daily Experience teaches us, People generally fixing their Minds and Hearts too much upon the perishable Goods of this Life, which must at last be left behind) it is extremely precarious and doubtful, whether our Friends and Brethren will be so solicitous and fervent to pray or get us pray'd for after Death, as our future Circumstances might require, or our present Hopes may conceive; it cannot but be on all Accounts the safest for us to make a timely Provision for ourselves, to endeavour, e'er we make the grand important Passage to a future State, to clear every Debt due to the divine Justice, by assiduous and fervent Acts of Contrition, Prayer, Humility, Patience, Penance, the sure means for obtaining Indulgences; in short, by never giving over a penitential bewailing of our Sins but with Life itself. And yet, alas! how deficient are not we All in this particular. But the Almighty Beneficence knowing that a very great Part of us poor Mortals, by reason of Age, Weakness, Constitution, Poverty, or other Circumstances in Life, are little able to fast long, pray

pray much, give Alms, or undergo those penitential Austerities of Abstinence, Vigils, and other Mortifications, which the Saints in Heaven have practiced, and many living Saints now practice in the Church ; well knowing this, I say, out of an infinite Mercy and Commiseration for our Frailty and Infirmary, has bequeathed to the Church the sacred Treasure of Christ's precious Life, Sufferings, Death and Merits to be dispensed to us, as mention'd above, in order to supply our Wants and Deficiencies at Times, that nothing on Christ's Part might be wanting to bring us to him, nothing retard us from his blissful Presence. May his holy Name be honour'd, blest, and adored for this Immensity of Goodness, by all Creatures on Earth and in Heaven, for ever and ever.

There remains still to know, with regard to the Nature of Indulgences, whether the Pope can without just Cause grant, Indulgence? To resolve which Difficulty, it must be premised, that this Question may be understood either of the Effect, which the Grant of
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Indulgences naturally produces, namely a zealous Application of the Faithful to Acts of Piety in order to gain them, or else the final Cause in the Pope's Intention, that is, the Motive he has, or Object he aims at in granting an Indulgence. Now with regard to the former, as the Faithful are necessarily roused by Indulgences to the Performance of extraordinary supererogatory Acts of Piety, more than they probably would be without them, his granting Indulgences in this Sense cannot but be always good. But with regard to the latter, supposing it be possible for the Pope to have any unjust or sinister Purpose to answer, he could not lawfully procure it by means of the Prayers and Good-works of the Faithful, any more than he could without infinite Absurdity imagine such Means likely to succeed: and consequently could not lawfully grant Indulgences for such an End. Besides that, he is not Lord and Master of this sacred Treasure, but Steward and Dispenser of it. And as *St. Paul* says, it is requisite among the Dispensers one should

should be found faithful. And as Pope *Clement* the VIth, and St. *Bonaventure* observe, commendable, pious and reasonable Motives join'd with Prudence and Moderation are required; otherwise God will not accept of them from the Dispenser, whatever he may do in favour of those to whom they are dispensed, and who therefore make use of them *bonâ fide*. Tho' it is very probable, that God, who has promised to send his holy Spirit to preside over the Government of the Church to the End of the World, will never suffer any of his chief Pastors, let them be ever so defective in their private Persons, to dispense so great a spiritual Good without a just Cause. But whether they may or may not, it is not the Business of any of us Particulars to examine into their Motives, but rather to dispose ourselves in the best Manner, and with all the Devotion and Fervour we are capable of, in order to gain the Indulgences granted: very sure that if we do what is enjoin'd us, and fulfil the Conditions on our Side, God who directs us to obey, will not suffer

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us for any sinister Intention in the Dispenser of the Riches of his Goodness, to be deprived of them ; and therefore the greater our Fervour and pious Dispositions are, the more certain may we be of reaping the Benefit of Indulgences. The Motives for which Indulgences should be, and I dare say, always are granted, are chiefly the Glory of God, the common Good, and the Necessities of the Church, and of all the Orders, Degrees and States of it, Peace and Concord among Christian Princes, the Increase of Christ's holy Faith, the Extinction of all Heresy, Schism, and Infidelity, the appeasing God's Wrath in Time of Pestilence, War, and Famine, for which and other such Ends we are excited by Indulgences to pray so much the more fervently.

What is required of the Faithful is a pious and punctual Compliance on their Side with the Conditions specified in the Grant of the Indulgence, as publish'd to them. And These consist in certain Good-works ; such as a sincere Repentance first and before all,

all, a faithful Confession, a devout receiving the holy Eucharist, fervent Prayer for the Improvement of their own Sanctification, accompanied with certain Prayers when they visit the Churches or Chapels for obtaining the Things and Blessings specified in the Pope's Grants.

C H A P. IV.

Of the Origin and Antiquity of INDULGENCES.

IF we consider what is of Faith, and a Term of Communion, which is that Christ left a Power in his Church to grant these Indulgences so beneficial to the Faithful, we may truly say, he is the Author and Origin of them, and that no greater Antiquity can be desired. From this Power given to *St. Peter* and his Successors, we may, and that not without Reason, collect that it was put in Practice by our Saviour himself, and by his Apostles as Occasions offer'd. For all that
our

our Blessed Saviour and they did and preach'd is not recorded in Holy-Writ, as St. *John* in his Gospel takes notice, cap. xxi. ver. 25.

As to a farther Use of this Power, and the Antiquity of this Use, we have for sure Grounds the Authority of Popes and general Councils.

Pope *Leo* the III^d, Anno 803, in the Time of *Charles the Great*, granted various Indulgences. *Urban* the II^d, 1099, granted the same at the Dedication of Churches, and to All who took up Arms or contributed towards the Recovery of the Holy Lands. We read that *Lewis* King of *France* obtain'd from the Pope the same Favours for himself, and for all those who should visit the Chapel he built for a Repository of the holy Relicks, which the Emperor of *Constantinople* had made him a Present of. *Calixtus* the II^d, 1124, *Eugenius* the III^d, 1153, confirm'd all the Grants of their Predecessors, which made St. *Bernard* cry out, " O happy
" Generation, in whose Time such a
" Plenty of Indulgences is granted!

C

Take

“ Take up the Banner of the Cross, and
 “ you will obtain an Indulgence, for
 “ whatever you have confess’d with a
 “ contrite Heart.” In the Year 1300,
Boniface the VIIIth, solemnized the Ju-
 bilee, not as a Thing instituted by him-
 self, but in his *Extravagant*, or Bull,
 approves and confirms it as very ancient,
a Majoribus acceptum : And that
 for every hundred Years. *Clement* the
 VIth, 1343, confirm’d all which was
 dispensed by his Predecessors, and re-
 duced the Jubilee to every fiftieth Year,
 for this Reason, *viz.* if it had remain’d
 fix’d to a hundred Years, many Mil-
 lions of Souls would have been de-
 prived of so great and singular a Bene-
 fit, Man’s Life being so short. For
 this very Reason *Paul* the IIId, 1470,
 reduced it to every twenty fifth Year,
 which *Sixtus* the IVth 1484, confirm’d,
 and all their Successors down to us have
 imitated their Example. Nor does
 this tie the Hands of succeeding Popes
 from granting Jubilees as often as they
 judge expedient for just and weighty
 Reasons, as we have happily seen in our
 Days.

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In the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth Century, and as we have experienced in the present Age, they became more frequent. Here I may cry out with St. *Bernard*, “ O thrice happy People, to whom such frequent Occasions are offer’d of obtaining an entire Remission of Sin and Punishment from the Hand of God ! ” Yet shall we hear some tepid and indolent People murmur at frequent Indulgences, which if they would give themselves time to reflect on with a serious Thought, they must be of a different Sentiment, blush at their scandalous Talk, and bless and adore God’s infinite Goodness, for leaving such a sacred Power in his Church : And they would admire and praise the paternal Clemency of the Popes, in so often dispensing the said Power. For as the Effect of Indulgences depends upon an exact and due Performance of the Conditions required, we may be unhappy enough not to fulfil them so duly at one Time, as we might do by God’s Grace at another, by endeavouring with

a more upright Intention, with more Fervour and Devotion to comply with them : And ought not a true Sense of our Salvation, of being freed both from Sin and Punishment move us to seek and embrace all possible Means, and as often as they are offer'd, tho' every Day, to be reconciled to our divine Maker and Redeemer ? At the Hour of our Death, we shall, I am convinced, with Vehemency wish for them ; and God grant of his infinite Mercy it may not be too late, when that dreadful Hour approaches ! Hearken not then to such Railers, nor to miserable *Martin Luther* and his Followers, who pretend that Sin and its Punishment are always remitted at the same Time, by which false Doctrine they strive to evacuate the Efficacy of Indulgences, and persuade their ignorant Pupils that they are nothing but a human Invention, with other like scurrilous and horrid Expressions ; thoughtless (and it is to be fear'd wilfully so) of the Examples which the Holy Scriptures furnish us with to the contrary in many Places. Besides the
entail'd

entail'd Punishments upon all Mankind, after original Sin is remitted. And again what can be more urgent against them than the Example of *David*, and what the Prophet *Nathan* said to him, *Thy Sins are pardon'd, but the Child shall die, and the Sword shall not depart from thy House?* Not but that according to the Greatness and Intensity of our Sorrow, I am persuaded, the Punishment in proportion is remitted, tho' not totally, or the whole, as we plainly see in this royal Prophet, than whom no Man cou'd express a greater and deeper Sorrow, as appears in his Psalms. And tho' still he was declared a Man according to God's own Heart, yet great Punishments were inflicted upon him as the Prophet *Nathan* foretold. Let me then, O Christians, exhort you to implore God's Grace, to use your best Endeavours in Time of Indulgences, to obtain this great Mercy at his all bountiful Hands. Thrice happy the Man that gains a Plenary Indulgence to be thereby restored to his baptismal Innocence!

Now as to Councils on this Head. We find the first and fourth general Councils of *Lateran*, of *Lyons*, of *Vienne*, of *Constance*, of *Basil* (tho' in other Matters it opposed the Pope) all approving Indulgences, and their Use in the present Practice, and Sense of the Church; treating of them not as of a new Invention, but as what had been of a most ancient standing. I cite not their Words for Brevity sake, and because their Sentiments are fully expressed by the venerable Fathers of the Council of *Trent*. SS. 25. in their Decree of Indulgences, which is as follows. “ Since the Power of granting
 “ Indulgences was given by Christ to
 “ his Church, and that she has made
 “ use of this divine Power even in
 “ the most ancient Times, *antiquissimis etiam temporibus*, the holy Synod teaches, and declares the Use
 “ of them approved by the Authority of holy Councils to be *maximè salutare*, most beneficial to Christian People, excommunicating all
 “ those who say, they are unprofitable, or deny a Power in the Church
 “ to

“ to grant them. Then providing a-
“ gainst Abuses, desires the Bishops, if
“ any such Abuses should occur, to
“ consult together, and send their Senti-
“ ments to the Pope, by whose Pru-
“ dence and Authority a Stop may be
“ put to them, and may be ordain’d
“ what is most proper and expedient
“ for the universal Church; that so the
“ Gift of holy Indulgences may pi-
“ ously, holily, and incorruptibly be
“ dispensed to the Faithful.”

If it be asked why I do not men-
tion more ancient Councils, as those of
Ancira, *Neocesarea*, the first Council
of *Nice*, the fourth of *Carthage*, &c.
as also *St. Cyprian* and other ancient
Fathers? My Reason is, because I
think what I have said sufficient. And
moreover tho’ what they advance is
grounded in this sacred Power of grant-
ing Indulgences, yet after a diligent
Perusal of their Writings, they seem
to speak more particularly of a Recon-
ciliation to the Church of publick ex-
communicated Sinners, who either fell
from their Faith in Time of Persecu-
tion, or committed those horrid pub-
lick Crimes which gave great Scandal

to the Faithful, and occasion of blaspheming to the *Pagans*. For which according to the Canons then in Force, they were obliged to do seven Years publick Penance, or sometimes for a longer, sometimes for a shorter Space, as their publick Sins deserved. If it be again asked, why Indulgences were not so frequent in the first Ages, as they have been within these six or seven hundred Years? I answer, that the Popes without all doubt had substantial Reasons why in those primitive Times they did not make so frequent use of this sacred Power? But suppose they had not made use of it at all; does it follow from thence, that they had no such Power invested in them, any more than it could be rightly concluded from a Man's perpetual Silence in Company, or elsewhere, that he has no Power to speak?

However for the pious Reader's Satisfaction, I will set down here some probable Reasons for it. Almighty God was pleased by his Apostles, to confer on the Faithful many and great Gifts, called the *Charismata*, the Holy Ghost often visibly descended upon them

them at the Prayers of the Apostles. The precious Blood of Christ being fresh in their Minds, their Hearts burning with his divine Love, and an ardent Desire to attain to that Perfection which Christ and his Apostles preach'd up to them, they became so constant in Faith, so firm in Grace for the most part, that Satan with all his Wiles and Stratagems could not find any Entrance into their Hearts. Several even were so inflamed by these celestial Sparks, that they willingly and chearfully offer'd themselves to Martyrdom. And if Any were so unhappy as to offend their divine Redeemer, they soon wiped off the Guilt and Punishment by their extreme Sorrow and humble Confession; by fervent Prayer, by continual Works of Charity and Piety towards their distress'd Neighbours, by suffering with an Evangelical Patience for his sake all manner of Afflictions, Losses, Injuries and Persecutions. And those who fell into the publick Enormities mention'd above, for the greatest part humbly submitted themselves to the

Severity of the penitential Canons, tho' now and then, and as St. *Cyprian* thought, too often, begg'd off by the Holy Martyrs.

Besides, in that Time of Paganism, there was a most ardent Zeal both in the Prelates and People for a strict Observance of the Discipline and penitential Laws of the Church. Hence, whilst this Zeal, Charity and Piety lasted, there seem'd to be no Necessity for so frequent Indulgences. For what Necessity to open a Treasury, when the People abound with Riches, and all Necessaries? This is reserved for them when press'd with Want.

But in following Ages, when this Spirit of Zeal and Piety began to relent, Charity grew cold, and Malice abounded, nothing seem'd more expedient to put a Stop to the Torrent of growing Evils, than to use all possible spiritual Means to draw unthinking Sinners to a Sense of their deplorable State, to move and invite them with Lenity to a sincere Repentance, by liberally and frequently laying before and offering them these celestial Treasures

tures (as the Council of *Trent* calls them) being nothing less, as I have often said, than the infinite Price of our Redemption in a special Manner applied to us for the Remission of the just Punishments due to our Sins, already forgiven as to the Guilt, by a true Contrition and sincere Confession.

Who can therefore with Justice blame the Popes, who out of a paternal Commiseration and Clemency so often condescend to cure the Infirmities of their Children and Fellow-Christians, seeking nothing but to supply their Wants in all that may promote their speedier Ingress into Heaven to the utmost of their Power.

Perhaps it may be objected, that the Easiness of Pardon may be an Incentive to Vice; which may be, and has proved too true in regard to some perverse habitual Sinners, by a horrid and unaccountable Presumption; for such there have always been, and always will be. Must therefore Millions of Souls be deprived of so great a Benefit, because some do and will turn it into Poison, and to their own greater

greater Perdition? I must here add, that by upwards of forty Years Experience, I have known many habitual Sinners, in Time of Indulgences, sincerely converted to God, and never return'd to their Vomit, but persevered in a holy Life till their happy Exit; and who often publicly declared they should never have thought of quitting their sinful State, had not these Times of Indulgences, and the Piety they remark'd in others at these Times caused in them serious Thoughts of their deplorable Condition, and spurr'd them on to Repentance, in hopes of participating of so great a Benefit with their Fellow-Christians.

I am sensible this may be taken as a Stumbling-block by some, but are not other Articles of our holy Faith, and other pious Practices of the Church taken so? Can any Person wonder at this? When our adorable Master's best Actions, his sacred Miracles and Death for us could not escape the blasphemous Tongues of the *Jews*, and *Gentiles*, and they were, as the Apostle

tells

tells us, a Scandal to the *Former*, and looked on as a Folly by the *Latter*.

Moreover let us seriously reflect how many ways and secret Methods our infinitely merciful God makes use of, besides his Threats, promising Rewards, and a total Oblivion of all past Offences, to draw sinful Man to Repentance and a new Life. With what Longanimity does not his Goodness expect their Conversion, often furnishing them with internal and external Graces for this End? Yet how many miserable Souls out of a criminal Presumption and Perverseness of Heart go on in their Sins till they are quite harden'd, and drink Iniquity like Water. But remember God never abandons us, till we first abandon him, and even in our most criminal Excesses often affords his holy Grace to check us in them, and wean us from them. Now who but a Monster like an Atheist, (if there be such a one in Nature) dares blame the Almighty for this infinitely merciful Oeconomy in regard to wicked ungrateful Creatures as we are? And if his Vicegerents upon Earth endeavour
to

to imitate his so boundless Mercy and Clemency in the Use of that Power he has so graciously been pleased to commission them with, in inviting and encouraging, tho' ever so often, unhappy Sinners to return to their God, a God of all Mercy and Consolation; with what Justice can they be injuriously aspers'd and cry'd out against, as encouraging Sin?

CH A P. V.

Some Prejudicial Notions concerning INDULGENCES confuted.

I HAVE read in Protestant Books, and often heard in Protestant Conversation, that the Popes, Bishops and Priests sell Indulgences, and the Faithful buy them. As also that they are meer pious Frauds invented to enrich the Pope and Clergy, and to supply their Kitchens with Dainties. Nay that they are a Leave to commit Sin, and a Pardon for Sins to come. A modern Protestant pushes the Calumny

lunny yet farther, and boldly assures his ignorant Pupils, that they are the worst of Cheats, and abominable Injuries to Christ and Christians. But how false and groundless these Aspersions are, this short Exposition of the Nature, Origin, and Effects of Indulgences, and of the constant Doctrine of the Church on the Subject is, in my humble Opinion, sufficient to convince any unbiass'd Person. Nay let them inspect the Bulls of the Popes, and they'll find the reverse.

It may be laid down as a certain Truth, that all Popes, Bishops and Priests lie under the strictest Obligation to stand up like *St. Paul* against all vicious, perverse, erroneous, or even new-fangled Doctrines, and Practices, which shall creep into the Church of God, as they crept even in the Apostles Time, thro' the Craft and Pride of self-conceited Men, of whom *St. Paul* highly complains. Is it not then in the highest Degree incredible, that for so many Ages amongst thousands and thousands of holy, learned, irreproachable Bishops and Priests,

Priests, not one should have been found sensible of this great Obligation, or have had Courage to oppose and expose such wicked symoniacal Cheats, and horrid Doctrines, as Indulgences, if they really had been such; especially too, since they were obliged so to do under Pain of Damnation? They always did in all Ages, as all Histories bear Witness, whenever, and as soon as the venomous Serpent of false Doctrines and Novelties began to peep out, and shew its Head, resist it at every Hazard. If it be alledged, they were Parties concern'd in these Cheats, and therefore would neither speak nor write against them: Such a ridiculous Reply may have Weight with Fools and Children, but cannot be admitted by any Man of Sense. Moreover is it not most surprising (if Indulgences were venal, as Malice gives out) that amongst all the Catholick Kings, Princes, Magistrates and other Laity of all Ranks, and whose Pockets and Interests were and are nearly and really concern'd, no one single Person should be found to expose and oppose a Fraud so degrading

to common Sense: But that all should be so lull'd asleep, so blinded, as not to be able to detect such a palpable simoniacal Imposture, such a diabolical Cheat, as that would be, which is laid to the Church's Charge?

All which impartially consider'd makes up a convincing Argument that the above-mention'd Protestant Assertions are downright Falshood and Calumny, unjustly laid upon so venerable and illustrious a Body of Catholicks dispersed over all the World.

It is true that Popes have granted Indulgences to those who went to the holy Wars, or who contributed their Charities to others for the same Purpose, when they went not themselves, and to those who employ'd their Riches in building of Churches and Hospitals for the Sick, Lame and Blind. Nay sometimes, and particularly in Jubilees, they require as a Condition, that Alms be given to the poor and distressed (not to the Popes, Bishops, or Priests) as Piety shall suggest to them. But can any thing in this kind be called buying and selling? Will
this

this fill the Pope's and Clergy's Coffers with Riches, and their Kitchens with Opulence? What Cheat can there be in this, or in what the Popes require, and the Faithful are to perform, (as explain'd above) for an effectual gaining them? How can it be call'd an abominable Injury to Christ and Christians, when only tending to his Glory, to the Relief of our Fellow-Creatures, to a more speedy Reconciliation of poor miserable Sinners to their God and divine Redeemer, and consequently to a perfect Sanctification of their Souls? The holy Scriptures are profuse in the Commendation of Alms-deeds; and assure us they blot out a Multitude of Sins; it cannot then but be esteem'd the best of Actions to animate Christians to so great a Work, and to the many Acts of Virtue and Christian Piety mention'd before, and repeated below. All which is done by opening the spiritual Treasure of the Church, when Indulgences are granted.

Let our moderate Adversaries weigh with the Weights of the Sanctuary
what

what has been said, and then judge between themselves and Catholicks.

If ever Abuses crept in in this Regard, the holy Church always took special Care to redress them, and punish the Delinquents, as appears by her Laws in several Councils. But what Argument can be drawn from some Persons prophaning this or that holy thing to prove that the Thing itself is not Holy? What Nature ordained for Man's Use and Benefit is frequently abused; ought we therefore to condemn and cast it off? At this rate we must have a Contempt for the most sacred Mysteries of our Faith, because some have abused them, and do abuse them: we must neither eat nor drink, because we daily see such monstrous beastly Abuses and Excesses committed therein. We must lay aside the Fountains of Life the holy Scriptures, because we see them daily prophanely abused, and turn'd to the worst of Senses. People may as well cry out against the Sun, Moon, Stars, &c. because senseless Men have adored them as their Gods. Let us then set the Saddle.

Saddle upon the right Horse, and condemn the Abusers, not the things abused ; Man's perverse Will, not what was ordain'd by God and Nature for his eternal and temporal good. Let them consider well of it, who are pleased to make themselves merry (to say no more) with Indulgences at the expence of Truth.

I would willingly know of these Gentlemen, if it would not be a truly happy Day, could we see all the loose People in *England* instead of going in crowds to vain Spectacles, Riots, &c. join with the devouter Christians, cast themselves at the feet of God's Ministers, confess their Crimes before God and them with a true Hatred and Aversion for their past Sins, and that for the Love of their great good God and adorable Redeemer alone, making firm Resolutions by his holy Grace never to fall into the same again, to forsake and intirely abandon the occasions of their woful Fall, to make all the Satisfaction possible to those they have injured either in Person, Goods, or Reputation, and fervently begging the Almighty to avert his

his Indignation from themselves as well as from their fellow Christians. Would it not be a ravishing as well as an uncommon Sight here, to see them all go with these holy Dispositions to receive the holy Sacraments, to pray jointly with Fervour and Devotion for the common Concerns of Christianity, and other important Blessings? All which are perform'd by Catholicks in time of Indulgences. What Joy, I say, must it not cause in all who have the least Sparkle of Religion left in them, to see the whole Christian World like them prostrate itself before the Throne of Grace, and by such Piety and Devotion endeavour to assuage his just Wrath against themselves and their fellow Creatures? If then they seriously and with an impartial Eye will reflect on this, and give themselves time moderately and maturely to consider of it, it is to be hoped, they will conceive better Notions of Indulgences, and of the holy Practices of the Church, which has nothing else at Heart in granting Indulgences, than God's Glory and the Salvation of Souls by thus putting a check, check,

check, as much as possible, to the Innundation of Vice, which overflows the Bulk of the People in these unhappy Kingdoms, for want of the like means to recur to.

CH A P. VI.

Concerning INDULGENCES *for the* DEAD.

AS it is an Article of Faith that there is a third Place, call'd by Catholicks *Purgatory*, in which the Souls of the Faithful, who departed this Life in venial Sins not repented of (which may happen either for want of Reflection, or by a sudden Death, &c. and has, it is to be fear'd too, too often happen'd) or who after a true Repentance for these and all mortal Sins, have not had time during their Lives to satisfy for and expiate, the remaining Punishments due to the divine Justice for them, by worthy Fruits of Penance. So also our Faith teaches us, that the holy Sacrifices of the Altar, that Indulgences, and the Suffrages of the Living
do

do more or less contribute to the Diminution of or total releasment from their purging Torments, as it shall please the divine Bounty to accept of them.

St. *Chrysostom* look'd upon the pious Custom of praying for the Dead as truly Apostolical, saying in his third *Hom. in Epist. ad Phil.* " The Apostles did
 " not in vain command these things,
 " that in the venerable and dreadful
 " Mysteries the Dead should be re-
 " member'd. For they knew they would
 " derive a considerable advantage from
 " it." St. *Cyril of Alexandria* confirms our Faith in this Point by the holy Practice of it in his Days, lastly says he, " We
 " pray for all that die amongst us:
 " thinking it to be the greatest Help
 " that can be to their Souls to have the
 " Holy and Dreadful Sacrifice of the
 " Altar offer'd in Supplication for
 " them." *Cat. Mystag.* 5.

The word Suffrage is taken in two Senses, viz. either for a Vote or Consent at Elections, or for a Help and Succour: in this last it is taken here, and often so by the Church. The Suffrages of the Living for the Dead, are chiefly and generally

generally accounted the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, Indulgences, Almshouses, Prayer and Fasting.

As the Dead are not subject to the Church, but lie under Sentence of God's rigorous Justice, the Popes do not apply Indulgences to them by way of Absolution, as they do to the Living, but by way of Suffrage; offering to the eternal Father, as Creditor, the infinite Riches of his beloved Son's most bitter Death and Passion for the Relief and Release of the Debts those poor afflicted Souls contracted when alive, and for which they are detain'd in those purging Tortures: And this by the Power of the Keys to which it belongs to open Heaven Gates, removing as much as in them lies, what Obstacles may hinder their entrance there; of which in regard to the Faithful departed, Punishment is one.

St. Bonnaventure's Words on this Head are very remarkable. *In 4. Dist. ultim. de Jud.* "Some are of the
 " Triumphant Church, over whom
 " the Pope has no power either to judge
 " or help them. Some are of the Mi-
 " litant

“ litant Chruch, over whom he has
“ power both to judge and help them.
“ Some are in a middle State, who are
“ already judged by the Almighty, and
“ are in a suffering Condition : Over
“ These he has no Power to judge ;
“ but has a Power to help them, be-
“ cause while they lived, they de-
“ served to be help’d after Death. ” I
cannot here omit the Words of the
great St. *Augustin* in his *Enchiridion*,
which are as follow. “ It cannot be
“ denied, but that the Faithful de-
“ parted are relieved by the Piety of
“ their living Friends, when the Sa-
“ crifice of the Altar is offer’d for
“ them, or Almsdeeds are given to the
“ Poor for this End : But they only
“ profit Those, who, while they lived,
“ deserved that these should be a Help
“ to them when dead. For Them
“ who are very good, they are a
“ Thanksgiving ; for Them who are
“ not very bad, they are Propitiations ;
“ and tho’ they cannot help Them,
“ who are very bad, yet are they, in
“ some manner or other, Comforts to
“ the Living : But, to whom they are
D “ bene-

“ beneficial, they are so far beneficial,
“ that they are either a full Remissi-
“ on, or their Condemnation is made
“ more tolerable.” So true it is that
Almighty God will never let go un-
rewarded whatever is done with true
Sentiments of Piety and Pity to our
distress’d Neighbours, and especially
for our dear Friends and fellow Chris-
tians departed, who can no more help
and assist themselves. And This being
of the highest Kind of Charity, will
be cast into the Balance, to weigh
down even the heavy Burden of our
own Sins. At the same time the
Words of these holy Men, Christian
Readers, deserve your most serious At-
tention, and cannot but move every
pious Soul to use his best Endeavours
to lead a true Christian Life, and often,
according to his Abilities, to help his
deceased Friends and Neighbours by
the Suffrages mention’d, that so he
may avoid those purging Torments,
or at least deserve, if unhappily he
should die indebted to the divine Jus-
tice, to be help’d by his surviving
Friends. For it will be measured to us

as we have measured to others: And the Goodness of God is so great, that he never lets fall to the Ground, such pious Acts of Commiseration: Which as many have experienced in their Life time, so will all, who practise them experience after their Deaths, when he will raise them Friends towards their particular Succour, as he did when living, besides the common Suffrages daily offered for all the Faithful departed thro' the whole Church. Neither can we think but that these Souls when freed from their Torments and received into the eternal Mansions of Bliss, will be mindful of those, who succour'd them here below: Almighty God giving them a Knowledge of their charitable Friends. In short, as the Souls in Purgatory are in the way to eternal Happiness, and by Charity are agreeable to God and Members of Christ, they lay just claim to a part in the Communion of Saints express'd in the Apostles Creed.

It is not reveal'd That this or That Soul departs, or departed, in the State of Grace, and God's Friendship. Nor,

if They did (as we may hope they did according to the Lives they led) is it reveal'd, what Torments in particular; for how long a time they are to suffer; or whether, and when the Almighty is pleased to accept of the Suffrages and Indulgences offer'd for them. This is especially true with regard to Those, who render'd themselves unworthy of them in their Life time, thro' a supine neglect of gaining them, or by shutting up the Bowels of Mercy to their departed suffering Friends. Hence it is that the Holy Church, by pious Importunities at the Throne of Mercy, often multiplies Indulgences, and repeats the holy Sacrifices, and other Suffrages for the Dead, with grounded Hopes in the infinite Goodness of God, to obtain at last the desired Effect for those suffering Souls.

By all which we are taught to fear the just Judgments of God; to watch and pray, to offer up, and assist at the dreadful Sacrifice of the Altar; and to do other Good-works, that we may so provide for ourselves, as either to escape those Torments, or be worthy to be assisted

assisted by our surviving Friends; that we may not be obliged, according to the rigour of divine Justice, to pay our Debts to the last Farthing in those purging Flames.

C H A P. VII.

Conclusion of the Whole.

TO conclude then, I shall only observe that, for fear we should not have those necessary Dispositions in the performance of what is required to gain Indulgences, it highly behoves us, and every good Christian, who sincerely loves God and his own Soul, to endeavour to supply all Defects of this kind, by imposing upon ourselves some voluntary Penance, as devoutly hearing Mass whenever our Station will permit; or, at least, daily offering to the Honour and Glory of Almighty God all the Sacrifices which will be celebrated thro' the whole Church. And That may be done, *First*, in acknowledgment of his supreme Excellency and Dominion over us as to Life and Death:

D 3

Secondly,

Secondly, in Thanksgiving for the daily Graces and Benefits his most gracious Bounty bestows upon us : *Thirdly*, in Satisfaction for all our Sins and Ingratitude : *Fourthly*, that by these holy Sacrifices of the immaculate Lamb our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ; (offer'd for us to his eternal Father, in remembrance of his bitter Death and Passion) we may obtain full Pardon of them and of the Punishments due to them, with a new supply of Graces from his sacred Hands to finish our Days in his Love and Service. And such ought to be our Intentions whenever we hear Mass, *that is* we ought to offer it to the Almighty for the Ends mention'd, as the Priest always does before he approaches the Altar ; only with this Difference, that He offers it up for all the Faithful Living and Dead, tho' he, at the same time, often applies it to particular Persons, when desired. If all Catholics made these Intentions, at hearing Mass ; I am persuaded they would be more attentive at the holy Sacrifice, and be ashamed of conversing with, and complimenting, one-another ; of
casting

casting their Eyes so much about, and minding more what Others are doing than They themselves, to the distracting of their Neighbours, and really and truly at the Bottom wilfully distracting themselves, with no small Disedification to All who are about them.

What will add an inconceivable weight to the Efficacy of the pious Exercises mention'd, are Alms to the Poor according to Each-one's Circumstances; for we know, the Widow's Mite is most acceptable to God. Another efficacious means is constantly, in the Morning, the first thing we do, to consecrate to his Glory our Selves and Families, and all our Actions of the Day; earnestly imploring his divine Goodness to preserve us from Sin as the greatest of Evils which can befall us. By this morning Offering, whatever we do during the Day, being done in him and for his Honour, cannot but draw down upon us many Blessings, and move his divine Bounty to protect us from many Dangers both of Soul and Body. What pity then is it not, that too too many thoughtless

and

and idle Christians, deprive themselves of so inestimable Fruits and lose the Merit of so many good Actions either out of Laziness, or by wilful Neglect of this morning Oblation? What must they not expect to suffer here and hereafter, for the Contempt of such good Actions: All which may be perform'd in a few Minutes: While they make no difficulty to spend whole Days, Weeks (nay perhaps Years) in idle Employments, vain Amusements, and other Dissipations, as Plays, and Fairs, with eager Ears and Eyes, hearing and seeing oftentimes the most senseless, useless Impertinences Hell can invent to corrupt youthful Minds and innocent Hearts? How will they answer the squandering away their Substance, while their Families are groaning at Home under Distress; and their indigent Fellow-Christians perishing for want of Necessaries? O that Christians would but consider what a severe Account they must one Day give to the living God, of all This!

Vain is it, and the highest of Folly, to plead their Youth, and that they shall

shall, after they have given full Scope to their Passions, have time enough to think to the Purpose. O unhappy Souls whose Thoughts are fill'd with such criminal presumptuous Notions! Can they promise themselves one Moment of Life? Does not daily most fatal Experience shew to them Many (and, perhaps, Some of their darling Companions) cut off in the very Flower of their Age by a just Judgment of the Almighty; and deprived of those sacred Remedies, he was pleas'd to leave in his holy Church for a perfect Cure of their ulcerated Souls? O terrible Catastrophe; which cannot but strike with fear and trembling every thinking Man! An eternity of Misery must be the fatal Consequence of it. This Consequence however we may easily avoid by the assistance of God's Grace offer'd to us: And Millions of Saints have avoided it by the assistance of that Grace. What Madness then and Inconsideration to lay our Damnation upon God? Nay, what Folly to lay it even upon the Devil? The Devil can tempt us indeed, and does all he can to seduce

us : But all the Devils in the Abyſs cannot force us to ſin, or to damn ourſelves. It is our own perverſe Will, which is the real Cauſe of our Damnation. By this it is we freely and willingly conſent to his infernal Suggeltions, and to the Corruption of Nature. By this it is we deſpiſe God's merciful Calls and the Graces he gives us to enable us to conquer all his infernal Legions. For the Love then with which you tender your precious and immortal Souls, think well on this, Dear Chriſtians. An Eternity of Happineſs ſurely deſerves ſomething from our hands to put in balance againſt the Weight of our Crimes.

Let us withal remember, that neither old Age, nor Weakneſs of Body, &c. can exempt us from making uſe of ſome of the eaſy means I firſt mention'd, (and ſhall mention farther in the Sequel of this) for the Sanctification of our Souls, and conſtant Thankſgiving to the Almighty for all his Mercies to us. What can be more pleaſing to him than an entire Reſignation to his bleſſed Will in all our Afflictions,

Afflictions, Pains and Persecutions? How chearful ought we not to be in adoring the Hand which chastises us; his Hand who permits nothing to befall us but what tends most to his Glory, and our Salvation? How assiduous should we not be in most humbly beseeching him to sanctify them all to us? How fervent in uniting them to those of our expiring Lord Jesus upon the Cross: In this we shou'd find true Happiness here below amidst all our Tribulations. And this need not cost us much Time or Labour: It requires only the lifting up our Hearts to God. So easy a thing it is to make ourselves happy for Time and for Eternity, if we will. On the reverse, what can be more displeasing to God than for Christians in their Tribulations to fall into blasphemous Expressions too too frequent in our Days? such, as “ I cannot bear this: God lays upon me more than Flesh and Blood is able to bear?” and such like. Surely they who use such horrid Expressions do not reflect what a Sin of Impatience they commit;

mit ; that they lose the Merit of their Sufferings ; are often the Occasion of other People's sinning ; and, what is most abominable, accuse God of Tyranny, whose boundless Goodness never permits us to be tempted above our Strength, but the Moment he permits any Misfortunes to befall us, furnishes us with all sufficient Graces to overcome and bear them with a Christian Patience. It is not then, that we cannot ; the Truth is, we will not endure any thing, but give full Sway to our natural Passions, and wilfully make ourselves unhappy, rather than cry out amidst the Bitterness of our Pains

“ Jesus, Jesus, be to me a Jesus, a true
“ Saviour, and strengthen me to under-
“ go what I lie under, and ten thousand
“ times more for thy Love and Sake,
“ who sufferedst so much and diedst on
“ the Cross for my sake. I humbly ac-
“ knowledge that my Sins deserve in-
“ finitely more than what I now suffer.”

To render then all I have said more useful by Practice, I recommend to all Christians the having frequent, nay daily

daily Recourse to such like Aspirations, and to Acts of Faith, Hope, Charity and Contrition; which, as they have an immediate Reference to God alone, will prove extraordinarily beneficial to them, by drawing down his Blessings upon them.

An Act of Divine FAITH.

O LORD! I believe in Thee, I believe all the Mysteries of thy Faith, tho' far transcending all human Comprehension: And That because thou hast revealed them, who art Truth itself, and neither canst deceive us by reason of thy infinite Goodness, nor be deceived by reason of thy all-seeing Wisdom.

An Act of Divine HOPE.

O GRACIOUS Sovereign! because thy Mercies are above all thy Works, notwithstanding the Heinousness and Number of my Sins, I put my whole Trust and Confidence
in

in thee alone, and in thy sacred Promises with full hopes of Pardon, for my past Offences, thro' the precious Merits and Passion of my amiable Redeemer: For thou say'st whenever a Sinner sincerely converts himself to thee, thou will convert thyself to him, and his Sins shall become white as Snow. O bounteous! O merciful! O adorable Saying to poor Sinners! O most inviting and comfortable Saying of an infinite offended Majesty! Truly may we cry out---- " who is like " to the Lord God of Hosts among the " Kings of the Earth? "

An Act of Divine Love.

O MOST gracious and bountiful God! I love thee above all things, with all my Heart, with all my Mind, with my whole Power, with all the Strength and Forces of my Soul; and That purely because thou art infinitely good in thyself.

An

An Act of CONTRITION or Perfect Sorrow.

O GOD of my Heart, and of all Comfort! O merciful Jesus, my adorable Redeemer! My Iniquities are so great and numberless, that I am altogether ashamed to ask any Favour at thy sacred Hands, and so confounded at the Sight of them, that I should sink under the Burden of them into an Abyss of Despair; if thou didst not by thy royal Prophet assure me, that thy Mercies are so much above the Sins of Men, that thou wilt not despise an humble and contrite Heart; and didst not thou for my greater Security and Comfort, declare that thou comest not to call the Just but Sinners to Repentance, and that even the Angels in Heaven rejoice at their Conversion to Thee. Upon this secure and solid Foundation in the Bitterness of my Soul, I cast myself at thy divine Feet, with the *Magdalen*. Grant, O sweet Jesus! that, as I have been so unfortunate as

to

to imitate her in her sinful State, my Love for thee and Sorrow for my Crimes may equalize her's, and that I may follow her penitential Steps and Fervour to the End of my Days. Here, O Lord, I detest and execrate all my past Offences mortal and venial, and from the very Inmost of my Soul am sorry for whatever, and in whatever manner, I have sinn'd by Commission or Omission, in Thought, Word or Deed, against thy divine Majesty, my Neighbour or myself, from the use of Reason to this Moment. I am, sweet Jesus, sincerely grieved for them; and That not for the Fear of Hell, which I have so often justly deserved, but purely for the Love of Thee, my God and my All; purely because thou art infinitely good. And this thy infinite Goodness is and always shall be, thro' thy holy Grace, the only Motive of my Love for Thee, and Sorrow for my Sins. For this Goodness thou art worthy of all Glory, Adoration, Bliss and Praise from all Creatures. And for this I do and will adore, bless, magnify,

nify, praise and glorify thy holy Name to my last Breath. O amiable and sweet Saviour! Help me to perform these holy Acts according to thy holy Will and Pleasure, that thereby I may be worthy to partake of the sacred Treasure dispensed to me at this holy Time of Indulgence, and efficaciously put in Execution the firm Resolutions I have made by thy holy Grace to avoid Sin, and so quit intirely all Occasions which may any ways induce me again to it. Grant this, O dear adorable Saviour! for thy own Love and sake, as out of thy gracious Bounty thou so earnestly tenderest my poor Soul's Salvation.

These and such like pious Acts may also be perform'd in a few Minutes. We cannot therefore pretend a want of time. At least let us remember that such a lame and frivolous Excuse will be of no Service to us, when we shall appear before the Tribunal of the living God.

It is my Advice then to All, not to omit these and such like pious Acts any day

day of their Lives; but much more in time of Indulgences, and whenever they design to approach the Holy Sacrament, after a serious and diligent examine for Confession. Neither should they forget to extend their Sorrow not only to Mortal, but even to the least Venial and hidden Sins of their whole Life; which done, they may be easy, and with security of Mind, approach to the Holy Mysteries.

As to what Prayers may be most pleasing to Almighty God and beneficial to us at these holy Times,-----tho' the Faithful may make use of the pious Prayers they find in their Manuals; yet the Lord's Prayer, so call'd because he composed and taught it, is the best of all Prayers, and all others are only an Explanation of what it contains. This, tho' short and easy, comprehends all we can ask of God either for his Honour and Glory, or our own eternal as well as temporal Good and Happiness. And therefore the holy Church takes the greatest care to have it explain'd to the Faithful even from their very Child-hood. And therefore
fore

fore also is it that the Popes, being sensible of the Virtue and Efficacy of this holy Prayer, when said with due Attention and Devotion (which is so great that one Lord's Prayer said after this manner is more pleasing to God, and better than a thousand other Prayers said in haste with wilful Distraction and huddled over in an undecent manner scarce excusable in Speeches to common Porters in the Streets) orders many Lord's Prayers, sometimes seven, sometimes five to be said for the Motives above mention'd, in order to gain an Indulgence. For tho' the saying one only if ordain'd might suffice before God, yet by a pious Perseverance and Continuation in that Prayer, we may obtain, what we were not worthy of at first. And for the like reason many Hail *Mary's* are sometimes join'd to them, that the glorious Mother of Christ joining in Prayer with us, her Sacred adorable Son may graciously condescend to our humble Petitions (made in his Name, thro' whom alone we can obtain the desired Effect) as being back'd by the Intercession of his beloved Parent.

I could add much more to what I have treated of in this short Work, but as it would swell it to a great Bulk, if I did; it might put it out of the Power of some poor People to purchase it. Besides, there seems to be enough said for their Good and Instruction in this nice Matter. For what may be farther useful to dispose the Souls of penitent Christians to reap the amplest Benefit from Indulgences by a sincere and fervent Contrition, ---- I recommend to my devout Readers a pious Work publish'd within these two Years, entitled, *A Paraphrase* on the seven PENITENTIAL PSALMS: Which the Anonymous Author, whoever he be, has fill'd with such Thoughts, Affections and Expressions, as would melt, if possible, a Heart of Stone to the sincerest, liveliest and most lasting Repentance and Love of God. In it the Reader will find matter sufficient to lift him to a Compunction like That which inspired the royal Prophet, who composed the Psalms themselves, to give Birth to that noble Production of Compunction after his unhappy fall, and happy blessed Conversion.

May

May that Author's Work as well as this Treatise of mine be truly beneficial to all devout Souls. For my own part, the Hopes of profiting these, and saving my own Soul by so doing, was what chiefly set me upon This, and what I chiefly aim at in Reward. Grant, sweet adorable Saviour, that hoping thus much from thy Mercy, I may not be confounded! *Amen.*

F I N I S.





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